

## **Authentication of Verbal Orders in Hospitals**

### **Interpretive Guideline**

Over the past decade, a number of hospitals in Washington State have adopted policies to allow passive authentication of verbal orders. JCAHO and the Department of Health's Facilities, Services, and Licensing Division (WAC 246-330-345(5)(h)) have accommodated these policies. Both these agencies have taken a standard of practice approach in allowing facilities to determine which orders require a physician signature and which should be authenticated if not rescinded (or not changed) within a designated time frame.

The acceptance is based upon the facilities having multiple licensed health professionals, nurses and pharmacists, routinely reviewing the orders and by monitoring "passively" authenticated orders for appropriateness and adverse effects.

Therefore, the Board of Pharmacy has decided to expand the definition of "authentication" in WAC 246-873-010 to include the current standard of practice in hospitals that have adequate policies and procedures in place to implement passive order authentication. The policies and procedures must meet the following requirements:

1. Policy and procedures shall be established by the director of pharmacy, approved by the medical staff, nursing service, and administration. The policy and procedures shall be available to Department of Health inspectors and investigators.
2. The written policy and procedures shall:
  - Verbal orders must be immediately transcribed onto an order form and then read back (i.e. confirmed) to the prescriber to ensure accuracy and completeness.
  - List the drugs or devices that are excluded from this policy and procedure. For example, chemotherapy and investigational drugs;
  - Describe the safeguards that are in place to verify these orders such as decentralized pharmacy services or automated order entry checks;
  - Include a specific quality improvement process to determine appropriateness of passively authenticated orders, to implement corrective action, and to determine if the corrective action is successful.
3. Department of Health inspectors and investigators shall have access to quality improvement data and reports regarding orders passively authenticated.

Approved by the Board of Pharmacy on December 3, 2003